



Viking Saga

NORTHWEST HIGH SCHOOL

GRAND ISLAND, NEBRASKA

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VOL. 58 ISSUE 1

The icing on top: How a cupcake pulled a class together

By Emelia Richling

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18-21 Program:
Photo Courtesy of Kenzie Mollring

New Teachers:
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How do masks work?:
Illustration by Alaura Favazza

Fingerprint Identification:
Photo by Gabriel Lorenzo

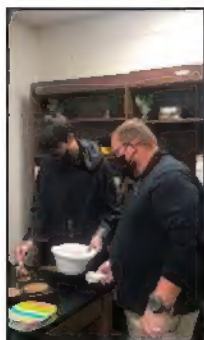


Careers and Introduction to Business
Teacher Chip Bahe tells the story of
how he got his cupcake.
Photo by Emily Krupicka

18-21 Program

The "Life Skills" program focuses on preparing students for independent living.

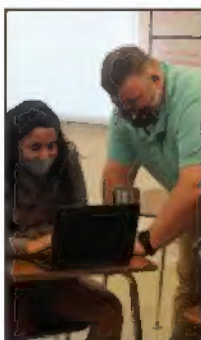
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New Teachers

Get to know three of the new people who are a part of the Northwest faculty.

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How do masks work?

How does a face mask protect from COVID-19? Which mask is the most effective?

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Fingerprint Identification

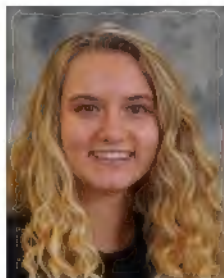
School security is an important feature to have as you walk into the doors of Northwest.

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More than diversity points or a liberal agenda: Kamala Harris

By Emelia Richling



The date was January 8, 2004, and a young Kamala Harris had just pledged to tackle domestic violence, sex trafficking and a slew of other human rights issues that had been largely ignored by her predecessors. At her inauguration for the San Francisco district attorney,

Harris accepted a large role that carried many responsibilities, a well-suited task for an ambitious woman whose determination to change the criminal justice system was unparalleled.

Sixteen years into the future, Harris has not only climbed the ranks of success but has also accomplished many of the goals she set out to achieve. The second Black and first South Asian woman to serve in the U.S. Senate, the former district attorney of San Francisco, the former attorney general (AG) of California and current Democratic Vice Presidential Candidate, Harris is no stranger to the political world, breaking boundaries and dissolving stereotypes in politics. She has garnered the support and respect of nearly everyone that has worked with her because she is different from other politicians.

In a National Public Radio article published from an episode of the Morning Edition on September 1, Jim Stearns, a top consultant for Harris since 2003, described how she has won over voters and made a name for herself. By becoming a memorable politician who maintains difficult promises and sticks to them even under intense pressure, Harris has been able to galvanize the support of the people.

Politicians often make empty commitments, telling people what they want to hear without following through on their promises. Harris is one of the few who makes impactful change for the people, such as maintaining her anti-death penalty stance, despite intense pressure from people who oppose her view.

As she transitioned away from her career in law enforcement to law-making, she was granted opportunities to learn and keep her promises.

Over the years, the number of gold stars Har-

ris has earned far outweighs the mass of any demerits.

For instance, in a Los Angeles Times article published by Phil Willon, he concluded that Harris kept her promise of never seeking the death penalty, won \$1.1 billion for students after learning they had been duped by their colleges and launched a program to reduce recidivism, which led to a 40 percent decline in reoffenders. These successes were monumental, far exceeding the job outline generally carried out by attorney generals.

In addition, Harris helped broker mortgage relief settlements, amassing over \$18 billion in aid and assisting more than 84,000 families in need, according to a 2013 report by the AG's California Monitor Program. The list seems to never end because Harris kept her promises to advocate for human rights, end unequal treatment based on sexual orientation and fight for the Equal Rights Amendment for women.

Harris is more than one political issue you may disagree with; she is more than just the accumulation of dry media reports. She stands for human rights, an issue that should be nonpartisan. She stands for criminal justice reform, a system that can greatly be improved. Harris is not a person to be discounted as just the potential vice president; she is a powerhouse of her own, an individual with the ability to knit together a country over the common issues that could always be refined.



Courtesy of Alaura Favazzo

VIKING SAGA

Northwest High School
2710 N. North Rd.
Grand Island, NE 68803
308.385.6394
www.ginorthwest.org

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Emelia Richling

CONTENT ORGANIZER

Gabriel Lorenzo

TREASURER

Emily Krupicka

DISTRIBUTION MANAGER

Danyka Galvan

WEBSITE MANAGER

Madeline Stratman

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Meghan Pennell

SOCIAL COORDINATOR

Areya Starke

CARTOONIST

Alaura Favazza

ADVISER

Kirsten Gilliland

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Any and all submissions must be signed to be considered for publication, and the editor reserves the right to edit or print any submissions.

VikingMedia



Northwest's 18-21 student program

By Danyka Galvan



kids who need a little extra help and reinforcement,” Linden said.

The program gives these students an extra stepping stone into their independent futures. In order to achieve this independence, their schedule is a little different than our everyday eight-period day.

“Throughout the day, we try to help them look for certain things that they didn’t even know were out there in the world to help them out,” Linden said.

Students also work on “budgeting, cooking, safety around the home, general safety pieces with technology and all the pieces that you need to learn along the way,” Mollring said. “These skills are taught to help them learn how to maintain a job. We give them feedback on their job performance so that they can improve and become more independent.”

In his journey to gain independence, Josh DeMuth is learning many skills not only in but also outside of the high school.

“I go to 1R school to help with the cafeteria, serving kids and cleaning up. I then help in the cafeteria at Northwest when I get back,” DeMuth said.

These students do a lot more for our school than what one might expect. This year they are starting to help out in the agricultural classes in the greenhouse.

In the greenhouse, another 18-21 student, Jared Fredericks helps water the plants.

Students in the 18-21 program will then get to take these skills that they learn and implement them in their future jobs. DeMuth said he wants to work at a motel.

“I really like to keep things neat,” DeMuth said. “I think that it would be really cool to clean rooms.”

This year, with COVID-19 affecting everyone’s day-to-day routine, these students have a busy schedule helping out the school by filling sanitizer bottles, filling water jugs and making sure to frequently sanitize around the school, especially the major touchpoints, such as doors, faucets and tables.

By learning and being prepared for their futures these students are really looking forward to becoming independent and getting into the world, increasing their excitement for the future.

“I am a friendly, dedicated person,” DeMuth said. “I can’t wait until I get a real job. I know that I would be a great employee because I don’t argue and I do my job.”



Not many people know about the 18-21 program at Northwest or what they do. Even though they are often overlooked, they are still hard at work helping around our school with things like emptying recycling bins and keeping our school clean, making it a place that students want to be.

“The 18-21 program provides services for a student in special education who needs support in independent living skills before the age of 21,” said Kenzie Mollring.

Mollring is the special services teacher for Northwest. Working alongside her is Paraeducator Jon Linden.

“To me, this is a life skill program where we teach life skills (How to cook, stay organized, use transportation and social media) for



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Getting to Know: Matthew Fritsche

By Meghan Pennell

What is your position at Northwest?

"I am the athletic director and assistant principal."

Have you taught before?

"I taught in Bellevue for a while and coached college basketball for eight years at schools like Midland, Creighton and Hillsdale College."

What brought you to Northwest?

"Honestly, I had a strong desire to get back to Nebraska and focus on being a better dad. Now my kids can see their grandparents more often and we don't have to travel as much."

Are you involved in anything outside of school?

"Not really. This job has me pretty busy, but I love hanging out with my family when I have the time."

What is an interesting fact about you?

"I have a nine-year-old and six-year-old who are just getting started in sports. They are super social and excited about school."



Getting to know: Michael Lambert

By Madeline Stratman

What is your position at Northwest?

"I teach ninth-grade World History and eleventh-grade American History. I am an assistant wrestling coach and assistant middle school football coach."

Have you taught before?

"This is my first teaching job, but I did my student teaching at Lincoln Southeast High School last fall. I taught Psychology and American History."

What brought you to Northwest?

"I graduated from UNK, and I love the Tri-City area, so Grand Island was a great fit. I knew that I wanted to be at a smaller school district that felt more like a family. Northwest is everything that I was looking for in a school."

Is there anything you want your students to know about you?

"Always feel free to talk to me about anything. Odds are, I've been in your position before and can help you out!"

Are you involved in anything outside of school?

"I am not involved in anything besides what I coach. However, I like to play disc golf, cornhole and hacky sack."

What is an interesting fact about you?

"I can make 1-minute oatmeal in 55 seconds. Also, I have a four-year-old cat named Crystal."



Photo Obtained from UNK

Getting to know: Robby Collins

By Meghan Pennell

What is your position at Northwest?

I teach Sophomore English, American Literature and Drama II. I am also co-directing the one-act play and am an assistant speech coach.

Have you taught before?

"I substituted for a while and was an elementary paraeducator."

What brought you to Northwest?

"When I graduated college with my master's, I knew I wanted to stay close to home in Hastings. I had run into Ms. Gilliland, who told me about the position, and knew it was exactly what I was looking for."

Is there anything you want your students to know about you?

"I am interested in more than just books. I enjoy watching some sports, especially the high school games here at Northwest. I love movies, video games and do a lot more than just sit and read."

Are you involved in anything outside of school?

"I am a member of the Knights of Pythias, a group in Hastings focused on serving the community. We help out a lot with the Special Olympics and hosting different dances and events."

What is an interesting fact about you?

"I would say I'm a jack of all trades, master of none. I know a little about a lot of things but not really a lot about one thing, except maybe English or theater."



Folkers makes national ensemble

By Meghan Pennell



Photo Courtesy of Sydney Millsap

Sophomore Ben Folkers surprised not only the Northwest community by making a National Association for Music Education, NAFME, nation-wide honor ensemble, but surprised himself too. Folkers worked hard to prepare and record his audition and has been esteemed to play trombone in the ensemble. Originally planned to take place November 8-11 in Orlando, Florida, the ensemble is planning on developing a virtual way of playing together even through the pandemic.

Last year, as a freshman, Folkers made first chair trombone in All-State Orchestra, allowing him to audition for the ensemble. Although Folkers is self-motivated when it comes to practicing, Band Director Shawn Pfanstiel played a large role in encouraging him to "throw his name into the hat."

"I made sure to keep my expectations low," Folkers said. "I didn't want to get my hopes up."

Folkers said he was shocked to see he made

such a prestigious band.

For auditions, players had to send in a timed recording as well as a written application. Folkers spent around three months preparing his submission with help from Pfanstiel.

"I was very happy to see Ben had made it," Pfanstiel said. "A freshman from Grand Island, Nebraska, getting to play with a national group is pretty exciting."

Although Folkers isn't sure about his future in music, auditioning for bands like All-State and NAFME have really grown his confidence as a player. Now that the work of learning notes and rhythms is complete, Folkers can focus on more advanced playing skills.

"The sky is really the limit for him," Pfanstiel said. "He has a high level of musicianship and a higher awareness of the nuances that separate a good player from a great player already."

Mask up, Northwest!

By Emily Krupicka

As schools reopen their doors, many districts, including Northwest Public Schools, are requiring students to wear face coverings at all times. Despite this, many students are still confused about the science surrounding the effectiveness of face masks.

In a press release, Dr. Robert Redfield, director of The Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), stressed the importance of face masks in a community setting.

"The novel coronavirus is spread person-to-person through respiratory droplets that emerge from coughing, sneezing and talking," Redfield explained. "Cloth face coverings are one of the most powerful weapons we have to slow and stop the spread of the virus."

The CDC has recommended that all people wear a mask in public areas and especially in areas where social distancing is not possible. This is a sentiment that local doctors can attest to as well.

"Face coverings are intended to keep the virus in, not keep it out," explained Dr. Erich Fruehling, an

interventional cardiologist in Grand Island. "If we knew who was sick, those kids would be the only ones who would need to wear a mask; however, since many kids are asymptomatic, it's more effective for everyone to wear a mask."

So far, the Central District Health Departments has reported 2,131 lab-confirmed cases in Hall County since the first reported case in mid-March. Experts have pleaded with schools, encouraging them to follow guidance from local health departments, as many medical professionals fear that number will spike even more with the reopening of schools.

"When we open schools, we're going to need to do it safely. We're going to need to do it sensibly," Redfield stated.

This advice has triggered skepticism among the public. In fact, many Americans have objected to taking precautions against the coronavirus, citing the idea that masks do more harm than good. The science, however, contradicts this statement.

"Thin paper or cloth masks will not lead to

hypoxia (an oxygen deficiency)," said Professor Keith Neal, an infectious disease expert. "Surgeons operate for hours wearing them, and they don't have these problems. When worn properly, a mask will not pose any respiratory-related health risks."

Neal stated that the confusion surrounding masks has derived from falsified social media posts that "look legitimate." These posts are heavily reliant on evidence that has been taken out of context or evidence that is completely inaccurate.

Based on the misinformation circulating throughout the internet, the CDC has noted that masks aren't guaranteed to completely protect people from the novel coronavirus. Masks do, however, strongly mitigate the chances of becoming infected, something that's vital to keeping schools open.

Although masks may pose a minor inconvenience throughout the day, they're effective in slowing the spread of coronavirus. With the case of masks, it is clear that the science has spoken for itself.

Northwest installs new security system

By: Areya Starke and Madeline Stratman

Something new came to Northwest this year to help the students and staff feel safer at school. The fingerprint scanner is the newest part of the high school security system. With the new changes, students have formulated opinions, and staff members have answered some questions students may have.

Senior Alaura Favazza said that student IDs in the past have been used for those entering and exiting the building, especially seniors during lunch. Because of this, some students think scanning IDs to enter the building would be a better alternative to fingerprinting.

"It would probably be easier and more sanitary," Favazza said.

There are concerns about the dangers of sharing germs and spreading the coronavirus since everyone would be touching the same fingerprint sensor. The administration would like to remind students that it's a good idea to wash their hands or use hand sanitizer after being fingerprinted to enter the building.

While there are a number of pros to implementing the new fingerprinting system, it has had a few glitches. For example, warm weather can cause the scanner to malfunction. It is unknown how the

winter weather will impact it.

Principal Tim Krupicka gives background information on the decision to implement the new fingerprinting scanners.

"The fingerprinting scan was the decision made last year in the spring before the pandemic started," Krupicka said. "We've been talking about this for several years, and Dr. Edwards, our superintendent, decided to move this forward."

In addition to providing some back story, Krupicka also mentioned the benefits and drawbacks.

"The pros are that it is not used for legal purposes or anything like that," Krupicka said. "It's just a scan of different points of your finger. It is not to be used against anybody for any purpose other than getting into the building. Another pro is the fact that we can put students in the different groups, like seniors who go off campus for college classes."

Even though there are a few kinks yet to work out, this newest addition to Northwest's security system will keep students, staff and visitors safe.

Being basic isn't basic

By Emily Krupicka

If you enjoy Pumpkin Spice Lattes from Starbucks, wear Lululemon leggings, eat avocado toast and own a Fjallraven Kanken bag, I regret to inform you that society has categorized you as one demeaning word: basic.



Beginning at the ripe age of six, I actively differentiated myself from "most girls" by straying away from the classic female archetype. As a child, I avoided being "basic" before the modern definition was even coined.

Instead of playing with dollhouses or princess dolls, I spent my recesses racing Hot Wheels cars and rambling about my love for Minecraft (a game I'd never actually played). While there is nothing wrong with different genders straying away from binary-based marketing, there is a fundamental issue with

Courtesy of best-clipart
girls who have similar interests—in completely normal and common things—feeling ashamed.

The term basic has simplified an entire gender and associated those holding the title with having superficial values. However, enjoying

a seasonal spiced coffee and debating politics are not mutually exclusive activities. Being basic itself is not a bad thing, but its use from others almost always comes with a negative connotation of unconscious, internalized misogyny.

If things traditionally deemed popular with females are basic, what makes an obsession with football, sports cars and hockey games so complex? Conflating genders with biased phrasing is dangerous and creates subliminal messaging of superiority and inferiority.

So, with fall, the "season of basic," underway, I can guarantee that Instagram feeds will be filled with girls in Uggs boots at the pumpkin patch, captioning their post with #basic. These same girls are students who are involved in numerous extracurriculars, take rigorous AP courses and create positive changes within their communities.

Although the word basic implies a sense of ordinariness, I would argue that women described as basic are anything but.



Good Luck, Northwest Students!

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The icing on top: How a cupcake pulled a class together

By Emelia Richling

On some arbitrary day in the fall of 2019, a funfetti cupcake with white icing and pink roses found its way to Chip Bahe's desk after a birthday party held in his advisement. During his second period Careers class, the cupcake was left on a filing cabinet. Over the course of six days, it would remain unnoticed.

"Honestly, I just set it up there and forgot about it," said Bahe, Careers and Introduction to Business teacher.

After about a week, when the second period class noticed the cupcake, it instantly became a class sensation.

"We just started to wonder what it would look like after a month and then two months," Bahe said.

As the weeks passed, it became a source of amusement for the class in addition to an experiment.

"Students used to go up there every couple weeks to see what it looked like," said Dani Matrisciano, junior and former Careers student. "It became so hard that you could just hit it on the table, but it always looked the same way it did on the first day."

Throughout those cold fall months that faded into snowy winter days, the cupcake experiment began to unite the class.

"We had a lot of kids in that class who participated in different

activities," Bahe said. "It was a neat way to bring people together."

Nearly a year later, the cupcake still sits on the same filing cabinet in mint condition, a subtle reminder that friendships can be derived from the unlikeliest of situations and that they never grow old.

Students continue to ask about it, even though they haven't been in Bahe's classes for months. During summer weights, on the first day of school and over the several weeks that school has been in session, the cupcake has still been a topic of conversation, an experiment and a way to mold a group of students together, although the cupcake has remained free of mold.

"And who would have thought that you could do it with a cupcake?" Bahe said.

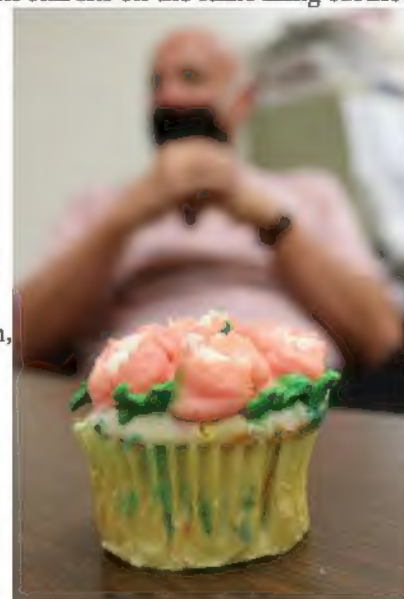


Photo by Emily Krupicka

Student business: Sydney's Scrunchies

By Danyka Galvan

Teen-owned businesses have been a lot more popular in Gen Z. At Northwest, there are a few student-owned businesses. "Sydney's Scrunchies" is a small business owned by Junior Sydney Fisher. As the name suggests, one item Sydney sells is hair scrunchies. However, as demand grew, she also began to sell headbands and hair scarves.

"Ever since I was little, I wanted to start my own business, mostly because I like being creative," Sydney said. "My brother, Mitch, actually owned his own business when he was a lot younger, and I look up to him."

Running a business alone is not easy, so Sydney often turns to Mitch for advice.

"Sydney is able to take in the advice and make it her own," Mitch said. "I would say the biggest area where I've helped her is with social media. I kind of told her to get on Instagram

and TikTok."

Sydney hand-makes all of her products and leaves heartfelt notes with each purchase.

"If I went on Amazon and bought them (hair products), I definitely would not get a note," said Junior Saylir Paulson. "Sydney's love for the customers makes me want to buy more."

By making customers feel valued, Sydney gains a wider range of shoppers. With growing sales, running a business can become very stressful, especially with school in session again.

"It gets stressful when I'm very busy with every other activity," Sydney said. "On top of homework and being in cross country, it gets tough sometimes. When school started, I definitely figured out how much I needed to plan ahead with time."

Sydney's scrunchies can be as cheap as \$1.99. Hair scarves are priced at \$5.99 and her headbands are \$6.99. Sydney has a variety of prints to choose from. These can be purchased on Sydney's website sydney132.wixsite.com/sydneys-scrunchies. Her website can be found in the bio of her Instagram: @sydneysscrunchiesco.





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SENIOR SPOTLIGHT

By: Areya Starke

EUNIQUE ZAPATA

Favorite binge-worthy shows?

"The all-time most binge worthy shows have to be Grey's Anatomy, The 100 and Supergirl."

Plans after high school?

"I plan on going out of state to pursue music performance and maybe music production."

Fun fact about yourself?

"I can play over five instruments, and performing is one of my biggest passions."

Favorite high school memory?

"All the laughs and performances I've done with 14 Karat Gold and definitely Goldtones as well."

Advice for underclassmen?

"By all means, do not wait to get out there and do what you love, and don't ever be afraid to stand out. There is beauty in diversity! Life is so, so short. This four years is up to you and what you choose to do with it. On the other hand, don't forget to have fun and make amazing memories that will last a lifetime."



Photo Courtesy of Eunique Zapata

HORIZON BERENDS

Favorite binge-worthy shows?

"I would say Rick and Morty and Outer Banks."

Plans after high school?

"After high school, I plan to attend CCC before I go to UNL to major in veterinary science. I plan to become a vet tech or assistant and hopefully later on a veterinarian."

Fun fact about yourself?

"I did color guard for all four years of high school."

Favorite high school memory?

"My favorite high school memory is going to band competitions and marching in the parades as well as performing afterwards."

Advice for underclassmen?

"Enjoy high school and all the little things. It really does go by fast. Be involved, but don't work yourself too hard and just live in the moment. Have fun, and live what little time you're in high school to its fullest."



Photo Courtesy of Horizon Berends

JERVON BUTLER

Favorite binge-worthy shows?

"Stranger Things."

Plans after high school?

"After high school, I plan to go to UNK for psychology. I want to buy a house in Chicago after graduating college."

Fun fact about yourself?

"I'm a sneakerhead."

Favorite high school memory?

"My favorite high school memory was freshman year when I was a part of the musical 'High School Musical 2.'"

Advice for underclassmen?

"My advice for underclassmen is don't stress."



Photo Courtesy of Jervon Butler

In the news...

By Gabriel Lorenzo

- North Road and Capital Avenue are still closed due to the construction of a remodeled road. According to KSNB Local 4, construction will conclude around the end of the year.
- As traffic issues start to rise, the Nebraska Public Service Commission is considering how cars can cross to get to their destination. They are still deciding how to find a solution to the problem.
- In Florida, COVID-19 has hit pretty

hard during these last few months. The number of cases increased by 26 percent. There is uncertainty about whether schools will still be a safe environment.

- The city of Louisville agreed that \$12 million will be given to Breonna Taylor's family. Taylor was accidentally shot by police executing a warrant six months ago.
- Former President Barack Obama will soon publish a memoir. Obama

mentioned in a tweet on September 17 that the book "A Promised Land" will be available in bookstores on November 17, right after the 2020 presidential elections.

- President Donald Trump has been nominated for the 2021 Nobel Peace Prize by Christian Tybring-Gjedde, a Norwegian politician. He mentioned that the president played a key role in the historic peace agreement between Israel and the United Arab Emirates.

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